

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT GUIDE TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

The "Justice Department Guide to the Freedom of Information Act" is an overview discussion of the FOIA's exemptions, its law enforcement record exclusions, and its most important procedural aspects. Prepared by the attorney and paralegal staff of the Office of Information and Privacy, it is updated and revised each year. Any inquiry about the points addressed below, or regarding matters of FOIA administration or interpretation, should be made through the Office of Information and Privacy's FOIA Counselor service, at (202) 514-3642 (514-FOIA).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	3
FOIA READING ROOMS	12
PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS	18
EXEMPTION 1	52
Standard of Review	55
Deference to Agency Expertise	59
In Camera Submissions	61
Rejection of Classification Claims	65
"Public Domain" Information	70
Executive Order 12,958	74
Duration of Classification and Declassification	81
Additional Considerations	84
EXEMPTION 2	88
"Low 2": Trivial Matters	90
"High 2": Risk of Circumvention	96
EXEMPTION 3	110
Initial Considerations	111
Subpart (A)	114
Subpart (B)	121
Alternative Analyses	125
Additional Considerations	131
EXEMPTION 4	135
Trade Secrets	136
Commercial or Financial Information	137
Obtained from a "Person"	138
"Confidential" Information	140
The <u>Critical Mass</u> Decision	142
Applying <u>Critical Mass</u>	145
Impairment Prong of <u>National Parks</u>	156
Competitive Harm Prong of <u>National Parks</u>	162
Third Prong of <u>National Parks</u>	183
Privileged Information	187
Interrelation with Trade Secrets Act	189
EXEMPTION 5	191
Initial Considerations	192
Deliberative Process Privilege	198

Page

Attorney Work-Product Privilege	215
Attorney-Client Privilege	223
Other Privileges	225
Applying the "Foreseeable Harm" Standard	229
EXEMPTION 6	234
Initial Considerations	235
The <u>Reporters Committee</u> Decision	237
Privacy Considerations	239
Factoring in the Public Interest	249
The Balancing Process	261
EXEMPTION 7	276
EXEMPTION 7(A)	293
EXEMPTION 7(B)	310
EXEMPTION 7(C)	311
EXEMPTION 7(D)	336
EXEMPTION 7(E)	364
EXEMPTION 7(F)	372
EXEMPTION 8	376
EXEMPTION 9	381
EXCLUSIONS	382
The (c)(1) Exclusion	383
The (c)(2) Exclusion	386
The (c)(3) Exclusion	388
Procedural Considerations	390
DISCRETIONARY DISCLOSURE AND WAIVER	392
Discretionary Disclosure	394
Waiver	403
FEES AND FEE WAIVERS	413
Fees	415
Fee Waivers	423
LITIGATION CONSIDERATIONS	438
Jurisdiction and Venue	439
Pleadings	451
Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies	454
" <u>Open America</u> " Stays of Proceedings	463
Adequacy of Search	470
Mootness	480
" <u>Vaughn Index</u> "	485
In Camera Inspection	499
Summary Judgment	503
Discovery	510
Waiver of Exemptions in Litigation	515
Attorney Fees and Litigation Costs	519
Sanctions	545
Considerations on Appeal	549
"REVERSE" FOIA	555
Standard of Review	560
Executive Order 12,600	566
BASIC FOIA REFERENCES	569
Congressional References	569
Justice Department Materials	571
Nongovernment Publication	572